

WORKING THE LAND

SPRING 2022

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE MARION CHRONICLE-TRIBUNE, FRANKFORT TIMES, PERU TRIBUNE, WABASH PLAIN DEALER AND HUNTINGTON HERALD-PRESS



Higher input costs have consistently been the number one concern identified by farmers over the past six months, according to results from the Ag Economy Barometer survey.

Photo by Rob Burgess / Plain Dealer

By **ROB BURGESS**  
Wabash Plain Dealer Editor

There are concrete reasons for optimism for this year’s crop for farmers, yet a multitude of factors have many trending towards pessimism.

During a recent virtual presentation to the Purdue University Wabash County Extension Office, Purdue University Center for Commercial Agriculture director Jim Mintert, Ph.D. broke down the data regarding the Purdue University/CME Group Ag Economy Barometer.

The Ag Economy Barometer is calculated each month from 400 U.S. agricultural producers’ responses to a telephone survey.

“It’s not the same people every month, but they are people that are producing essentially about the same commodity mix every month. So, it’s a pretty representative sample,” said Mintert.

The most recent survey was conducted between Feb. 14 to 18, “days before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.”

Mintert said farmer sentiment continued “to fluctuate month-to-month.”

Mintert said the Ag Economy Barometer peaked last winter and early spring, peaking in April 2021 at a figure of 174. The Ag Economy Barometer rose 6 points to a reading of 125 in February, “a mirror image of the previous month.” The Index of Current Conditions was down 1 point to a reading of 132, while the Index of Future Expectations improved 10 points to a reading of 122. The

Farm Financial Performance Index remained unchanged in February at a reading of 83.

Mintert said this was partly because of the strength of commodity prices.

Mintert said since then, they have “seen a big decline.”

“Weaker expectations on the future have weighed on things,” said Mintert.

Mintert said this was tied to uncertainty in the agricultural sector, especially concerning “some of the things that have taken place on the cost side.”

“As we got into the fall, the 2020 crop year was pretty good. Some were sold at strong prices,” said Mintert.

Mintert said despite this fact, they were “still picking up the weak sentiment.”

Mintert said the sharp drop in the index, down 27 percent from late 2021 to 2022, “indicates producers expect financial performance in 2022 to be worse than in 2021.”

“The financial index is generated based upon producers’ responses to whether they expect their farm’s current financial performance to be better than, worse than or about the same as the previous year,” said Minert.

“These survey responses suggest that concerns about the spike in production costs and supply chain issues continue to mostly outweigh the impact of the commodity price rally that’s been underway this winter.”

Mintert said higher input costs have consistently been the number one concern identified by farmers over the past six months, according to results from the Ag Economy Barometer survey.

“To gain additional insight into the concerns of producers, this month respondents were provided with a more detailed set of possible responses when answering this question,” said Mintert.

While a majority still consider input costs as their number one concern (47 percent), it was followed by lower output prices (16 percent), environmental policy (13 percent), farm policy (9 percent), climate policy (8 percent) and COVID-19’s impact (7 percent).

Mintert said when farmers were asked if they thought it was a good or bad time to make large investments, “people were not very optimistic about making investments in their farming operation, which is very unusual given the strong income situation.”

“A lot of it was related to these higher input costs,” said Mintert. “People are concerned about other issues as well, but higher input costs really have people concerned.”

Mintert said they had been receiving several reports from producers that “it had been a challenge to acquire the crop inputs for the 2022 season.”

“Across the board, there are serious input supply chain problems. Not every person has a problem, not every product is a problem, but this is unprecedented,” said Mintert. “It’s uncharted territory.”

Tight machinery inventories continue to be a problem. In February, over 40 percent of producers stated that low farm machinery

See **SENTIMENT**, page E2

## Indiana 2022 spring climate outlook

By **HANS SCHMITZ**  
Purdue Extension

The big question for this spring revolves around how quickly Indiana can shrug off La Niña and return to El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) neutral conditions. Until that happens, the likelihood of a wet spring remains high. The national Climate Prediction Center (CPC) provided new guidance for the spring now that we are quickly approaching the beginning of the meteorological spring season.

Prominent in the latest guidance is a prediction of above-average precipitation over the eastern Corn Belt. On a map, the trend looks like a bullseye with Indiana in the center. Meanwhile, predictions for the eastern half of the United States are favoring above-average temperatures in March, April and May. This warmer, wetter, early-spring trend is associated with an extension of wintertime La Niña conditions, focusing the moisture on the front half of the three-month period.

Experts at the CPC say that regarding ENSO there is relative confidence that La Niña will remain in place throughout the spring, with a transition to ENSO-neutral conditions beginning in May. With this transition, less predictability in the long-range forecasts exists and the possibility for the wet signature to fade increases towards the end of the planting season.

The warming signature, according to CPC, is trending two-thirds of a degree warmer than normal over the period, which does not seem like much. However, parsing that guidance a little further, the CPC gives Indiana a little less than 15 percent chance of having a top ten percent warmest spring, with only a five percent chance of a top ten percent coolest spring. In other words, Indiana has a one in seven chance of a very warm spring and a one in twenty chance of a very cool spring.

The wet signature varies across the state, with southern Indiana expected to have more extreme wetness than northern Indiana. The predicted anomaly is 1.35 inches above average in the south and 0.83 inches above average in the north. Once again, due to the La Niña, that deviation towards

See **OUTLOOK**, page E2

# Farmland assessments will increase for taxes in 2023

By **LARRY DEBOER**  
Purdue University

Farmland property taxes have been falling. Total property taxes paid by agricultural property owners fell 2.3 percent per year from 2017 to 2021, mostly because of lower farmland assessed values.

But farmland prices are rising. A Purdue Agricultural Economics survey showed that average farmland selling prices increased 12.5 percent from 2020 to 2021. Eventually, farmland assessed values will rise too.

Assessments of houses are based on their selling prices, but that’s not true for farmland. Farmland assessed values are based on a statewide base rate per acre, times a soil productivity factor, and for some acreage, minus an influence factor for characteristics such as frequent flooding.

Changes in the assessed value of farmland depend mostly on changes in the base rate. That’s the dollar amount per acre established each year by the state’s Department of Local Government Finance. It’s calculated with a formula that divides rents and net farm income by an interest rate. The formula uses the calculations from six years and drops the highest, then averages the re-



maining five. For taxes in 2022, the six years were 2015 through 2020.

You can see the DLGF’s calculations and all the data at [www.in.gov/dlgf](http://www.in.gov/dlgf). Click on Assessments in the menu to the left, then on Agricultural Land Assessments.

The base rate increased a lot between 2008 and 2015, rising from \$880 to \$2,050 per acre, because of the increase in corn and soybean prices. They enter the numerator of

formula as part of the net income calculation. Commodity prices peaked in 2013 and began to fall. Eventually that reduced the base rate. It fell each year from 2015 to 2021. The base rate for taxes in 2022 will be \$1,290 per acre.

But commodity prices increased in 2021. The base rate formula will reflect that increase for taxes in 2023. That year the prices from 2015 will be dropped, and the prices for 2021

will be added. The DLGF’s data shows the average price of corn in 2015 as \$3.86 per bushel. The average price in 2021 was \$4.93, 28 percent higher. Soybean prices were higher too.

Drop the old lower prices, add the new higher prices, run the formula, and the base rate of farmland rises from \$1,290 this year, to \$1,500 for taxes in 2023. That’s a 16 percent increase.

The assessed value of farmland may not depend directly on farmland selling prices, but the same factors that influence the selling price also influence the base rate. Roughly speaking, selling prices and assessed values rise and fall together, with the base rate about two years behind.

The higher base rate means that tax bills for farmland owners will go up. If farmland assessments rise faster than other assessed values, farmers will pay a bigger share of total property tax revenue. There are complications, though. Indiana home values have been rising fast too, so the assessed values of homes will go up. That should offset part of the tax shift to farmers.

Taxable assessed values will rise faster than usual for 2022 taxes and likely keep increasing. A bigger tax base would increase the total revenues that local governments collect – except that Indiana imposes a maximum levy and restricts the increase of the maximum each year. The “maximum levy growth quotient” is based on how fast incomes rise, and it will be 4.3 percent in 2022. About three-quarters of all Indiana local governments set their property tax levies at or near the maximum.

See **TAXES**, page E2





Meltzer Farm in Shelbyville

Courtesy of Evan Hale / Indiana Landmarks

# HISTORIC FARMS SOUGHT FOR RURAL PRESERVATION AWARD

Deadline is May 13

PROVIDED BY INDIANA LANDMARKS

Indiana Landmarks and Indiana Farm Bureau welcome nominations for the 2022 John Arnold Award for Rural Preservation. The award recognizes the preservation and continued agricultural use of historic farm buildings in Indiana. Since it was established in 1992, owners of more than 30 historic farms all over the state have been honored with the award.

Anyone, including farm owners, can submit a nomination for the Arnold Award, which will be presented during the Celebration of

Agriculture at the Indiana State Fair in August. The nomination is simple and asks for:

- a brief history of the farm and description of its significant historic structures and features, such as the farmhouse, barns, agricultural outbuildings, and landscape elements.
- a description of how the farm’s historic agricultural structures are used in day-to-day farming operations, and how they have been preserved or adapted.
- high-res digital photographs of the farm and its preserved historic features. Historic images are also welcome.

The award winner receives an attractive outdoor marker and feature coverage in Indiana Preservation magazine.

Indiana Landmarks named the award in memory of John Arnold (1955-1991), a Rush County farmer who successfully combined progressive agricultural practices with a deep respect for the natural and historic features of the rural landscape. The John Arnold Award for Rural Preservation honors those who share a similar commitment to preserving the landmarks and landscape of rural Indiana.

Submit nominations for the Arnold Award for Rural Preservation online at [www.indianalandmarks.org/john-arnold-award-rural-preservation](http://www.indianalandmarks.org/john-arnold-award-rural-preservation), or contact Tommy Kleckner at Indiana Landmarks, 812-232-4534, [tkleckner@indianalandmarks.org](mailto:tkleckner@indianalandmarks.org). Deadline for nominations is May 13, 2022.

## TAXES

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Those governments can’t increase their levies more than 4.3 percent, no matter what happens with assessment growth.

That means, if taxable assessed values grow faster than the maximum levy growth quotient, tax rates will fall. They won’t fall enough to reduce the tax bills of farmland owners (or homeowners), but most farmland tax bills won’t rise by the full 16 percent increase in the base rate.

Most owners of business land, buildings and equipment will see their assessments rise less than farmland and homes. Their tax bills will increase less and could even fall.

Farmland values are increasing, and that means the era of falling farmland taxes is over. Come 2023, farmland property taxes are likely to rise.

*This article appeared on the Purdue Extension website.*

## OUTLOOK

From page E1

wetness is likely to be felt more greatly in March than in May. CPC guidance gives similar odds for wetness as temperatures. Indiana has a one in seven chance of a very wet spring and a one in twenty chance of a very dry spring.

As we look forward to getting outdoors and farmers begin to work ground, we may initially have limited windows where soils are dry enough to do anything, but those windows look to grow longer towards the end of the spring. For more information, please contact the Purdue Extension office in Posey County via [hschmitz@purdue.edu](mailto:hschmitz@purdue.edu) or 812-838-1331.

## SENTIMENT

From page E1

inventories are holding back their investment plans. While plans for farm building and grain bin construction were more optimistic this month, 56 percent still said their plans for new construction are below the previous year. Thirty percent of corn and soybean producers say they’ve had difficulty purchasing crop inputs from their suppliers. In a follow-up question

posed to corn and soybean producers who said they experienced difficulty procuring inputs, herbicides are the most problematic input to source followed by fertilizer and farm machinery parts.

“To learn more about how crop producers are responding to surging fertilizer prices, corn producers were again asked if they plan to change their nitrogen fertilizer application rate in 2022 compared to the rate used in 2021,” said Mintert.

One-third of corn producers in

this month’s survey said they plan to use a lower nitrogen application rate this year than in 2021, compared to 37 percent of corn producers who said they planned to reduce their nitrogen application rate when surveyed in January.

Each winter, the barometer survey asks producers to project their farm’s annual growth rate over the next 5 years. In 2022, 53 percent stated they either had no plans to grow or plan to retire/exit in the next five years, 19 percent expect their farm’s annual growth rate to

range from 5-10 percent, while 18 percent expect their farm’s annual growth rate to be less than 5 percent. The need for better broadband coverage in rural areas has been highlighted in several legislative proposals at both the state and national levels. The February barometer survey included a question asking respondents to characterize the quality of their farm’s internet access. Just three out of ten respondents said they had “high quality” internet access, 41 percent said “moderate quality,”

16 percent chose “poor quality” on the survey, while 12 percent stated that they did not have internet access at all. Responses to this question suggest that nearly three out of ten farms in this month’s survey are unable to take advantage of many applications and services which require reasonable quality internet access.

For more information, visit <https://purdue.ag/agbarometer>.

*Rob Burgess, Wabash Plain Dealer editor, may be reached by email at [rburgess@wabashplaineater.com](mailto:rburgess@wabashplaineater.com).*





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# PROFESSOR RECEIVES GRANT FOR PURSUIT OF AFRICAN SWINE FEVER RAPID TEST

By ELIZABETH K. GARDNER  
ekgardner@purdue.edu

African swine fever, a highly contagious swine disease, is in the Dominican Republic. The disease does not infect people, but it can wipe out pork production in a region. Quick identification and containment are key to stopping its spread, and a team of Purdue University researchers are developing a rapid, pen-side test for the disease.

The National Animal Health Laboratory Network and the National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program has provided \$1 million to Mohit Verma, assistant professor of agricultural and biological engineering at Purdue, for the project.

“A rapid test that can be done in the field is needed for surveillance and diagnosis of African swine fever,” he said. “When it hit China a few years ago, it wiped out 50 percent of the country’s pig population. It is a devastating disease, and hours, even minutes, matter in containing it.”

The research funding was included in the U.S. Farm Bill to build up the nation’s ability to quickly detect and respond to high-consequence diseases.

“This was the first time to my knowledge that a joint operation between these two organizations was included in the farm bill,” Verma said. “It shows how seriously the U.S. is taking the risk from African swine fever.”

Verma is collaborating with Purdue scientists Darryl Ragland, associate professor of veterinary medicine, and Jonathan Alex Pasternak, an assistant professor of animal sciences, to create a portable paper-strip test for the disease. The project follows in the footsteps of Verma’s success developing similar tests for COVID-19 and Bovine Respiratory Disease.

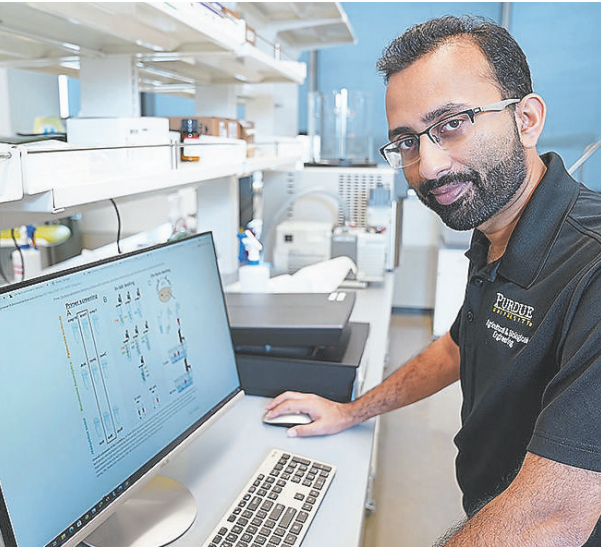
“We’re working on a test that will detect the virus within 30 minutes and indicate results through an easy-to-see color change on a paper strip,” Verma said. “The ease of use, test timing and size are similar to those of an at-home pregnancy test or COVID-19 test.”

A saliva or blood sample will be used for the test. Within a cartridge, the sample is mixed with primers and reagents developed by the team and gently heated. The included paper strip then changes colors if African swine fever DNA is present, he said.

“We want the test to be easy for farmers and veterinarians, and for the pigs,” Verma said. “Our hope is to create something affordable and accessible that could be broadly used in the U.S. and throughout the world.”

The technology tests for DNA from the virus and uses a method of nucleic acid amplification called loop-mediated isothermal amplification, or LAMP. When the viral DNA is present, LAMP amplifies it. As the level of nucleic acid increases, it changes the pH of the assay, which triggers the color change on the paper strip.

The advantage of LAMP over other methods is that it does not require extraction and processing of the samples, which can be lengthy and expensive, Verma said.



Purdue University photo / Tom Campbell

**TOP:** Pigs on a farm. Purdue University researchers are developing tools to help prevent and detect African Swine Fever.

**ABOVE:** Mohit Verma, professor of agricultural and biological engineering in Purdue University’s College of Agriculture, works in his lab. Verma successfully developed an on-site bovine respiratory disease test.



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# SMALL BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP GROWING SUPPORT FOR INDIANA AGRIBUSINESSES

PROVIDED BY INDIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indiana Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD), Purdue Extension, and the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) today announced a partnership to launch the Agribusiness Initiative.

The Indiana SBDC Agribusiness Initiative offers Hoosier small businesses and entrepreneurs in the agriculture sector access to no-cost, confidential specialty business advising and training, including financing, crop yield projections, U.S. Department of Agriculture loan packaging, value-added product development, and commodity exporting, among others. These businesses range from producers and processors of agricultural commodities to manufacturers of value-added products, machinery, technology and hardwoods.

“Small business development is big business for the state of Indiana,” said David Watkins, Indiana SBDC state director and Indiana Economic Development Corporation vice president of small business. “Entrepreneurs and small businesses are fundamental to the future growth and sustainability of communities across the state, and this partnership will focus on providing small Hoosier agribusinesses with the tools, resources and training they need to start, grow and innovate.”

Agriculture is a vital component to Indiana’s economic health, contributing an estimated \$31.2 billion to Indiana’s economy each year. With more than 15 million acres of farmland, Indiana supports more than 94,000 Hoosier farmers and is a leading producer of corn, soybeans, hogs, poultry, popcorn and tomato products. Indiana’s agricultural excellence is also driving exploration, experimentation and innovation as farmers and scientists work together to provide cutting-edge research that promises to move the global agriculture industry into the future.

“Over the past few decades, the needs of Hoosier agribusinesses have rapidly evolved,” said Bruce Kettler, director of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture. “This initiative recognizes the critical role agribusinesses, supply networks and distribution channels play in helping to ensure a strong Indiana economy.”

In addition to business advising and training provided by the Indiana SBDC, PCRD will provide administrative support, with additional advising services from Purdue Extension and ISDA. Former Hoosier Heartland Indiana SBDC



Regional Director Monty Henderson will serve as director for the Agribusiness Initiative. Indiana agribusinesses are encouraged to learn more about and register for the program online.

“Entrepreneurs are vital because they create new jobs, new wealth and new growth,” said Jason Henderson, senior associate dean and director of Extension at Purdue University. “The partnership behind the Agribusiness Initiative is a way to leverage the Extension network to connect and support entrepreneurs in every Indiana county, with resources at Purdue and beyond, to build stronger economic engines in the agribusiness industry.”

With its consistent leading-edge agribusiness and agtech activity, PCRD, which currently hosts two of Indiana SBDC’s regional offices, will host the new Agribusiness Initiative. The combined expertise, research and outreach efforts of PCRD and Extension complement the Agribusiness Initiative and help drive the Indiana SBDC’s goals to better serve developing agribusinesses and farms by employing and securing agricultural professionals to help bridge the advising gap.

### About Indiana SBDC

The Indiana Small Business Development Center

(Indiana SBDC) is a program of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, which leads the state of Indiana’s economic development efforts. The Indiana SBDC helps entrepreneurs and small businesses start, grow, finance, innovate, and transition through no-cost, confidential business advising and training. With a network of 10 regional offices through the state, the Indiana SBDC creates a positive and measurable impact on the formation, growth and sustainability of Indiana’s small businesses.

The Indiana SBDC is funded, in part, through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. All opinions, conclusions, and/or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA. For more information about the Indiana SBDC, visit [isbdc.org](http://isbdc.org).

### About Purdue Center for Regional Development (PCRD)

PCRD seeks to pioneer new ideas and strategies that contribute to regional collaboration, innovation and prosperity. Founded in 2005, the Center partners with public, private, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations to identify and enhance the key drivers of innova-

tion in regions across Indiana, the U.S. and beyond. These drivers include a vibrant and inclusive civic leadership, a commitment to collaboration, and the application of advanced data support systems to promote sound decision-making and the pursuit of economic development investments that build on the competitive assets of regions. Learn more at [pcrd.purdue.edu](http://pcrd.purdue.edu).

### Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) was established as a separate state agency by the Legislature in 2005. Administratively, ISDA reports to Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch, who also serves as Indiana’s Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. Major responsibilities include advocacy for Indiana agriculture at the local, state and federal level, managing soil conservation programs, promoting economic development and agricultural innovation, serving as a regulatory ombudsman for agricultural businesses, and licensing grain firms throughout the state.

## State Dept. of Agriculture receives \$500K grant to support mental health

By REGAN HERR  
Indiana State Dept. of Ag

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) has received a \$500,000 grant from the United States Department of Agriculture National Institute for Food and Agriculture’s (NIFA) Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) Program. ISDA is partnering with the Indiana Rural Health Association (IRHA) and Purdue Extension to reduce mental health stigma and connect individuals engaged in agriculture-related occupations to existing stress assistance programs.

“The agricultural community is an extraordinary one with hard working people and unique challenges, both economically and socially,” said Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. “This funding will assist rural residents with stress and help communities ensure residents know there are available resources help close to home.”

ISDA will be working with the IRHA to help those who live and work in agriculture to become more comfortable with mental health care options by holding 23 community workshops across Indiana. Conversations about mental health stigma and resources, as well as recognizing signs of those in mental health distress will be discussed. For a list of regional meetings and locations, please visit [indianaruralhealth.org](http://indianaruralhealth.org).

“Indiana is a very rural state with lots of farming and agricultural bases in many towns and cities. Our statewide workshops will work to provide these communities the tools they need to recognize stress, related mental health issues and mental health crises that unfortunately can lead to suicide attempts,” said

Kathy Walker, Program Director, Indiana Rural Health Association. “Our workshops will provide skills to help everyone recognize signs of distress. Indiana Rural Health Association works to enhance the health and well-being of rural Hoosiers through leadership, education, advocacy, collaboration and resource development.”

To supplement these activities, Purdue Extension will also survey and analyze the mental health call center landscape and capacity in Indiana and then create and deploy a specialized training module for mental health call center workers supporting farmers, farm families and agribusinesses.

“COVID, the breakdown of agricultural supply chains, price volatility and variable weather are just a few issues that have intensified the need for stronger supports for our farmers and agribusiness colleagues in times of stress,” said Dr. Jason Henderson, Director of Purdue Extension. “Purdue Extension is excited to partner with ISDA and IRHA on this project to focus on resources and tools to support farm families through these difficult times.”

Together ISDA, IRHA and Purdue Extension will highlight the importance of mental health care through broad promotions. This will include creating mental health promotional materials and visual reminders for the farming community that will be shared at events across Indiana, such as the Indiana State Fair.

“Farming is one of the most dangerous and stressful jobs there is,” said Bruce Kettler, director of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture. “Each person faces stressors in their job and in their life, and rural communities are no different. I am hopeful this project will highlight resources for their stress and any mental difficulties they may face.”

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# NEW PLANT-BASED COMPOUNDS HAVE BEEN CREATED TO TREAT ALCOHOL USE DISORDER

By **STEVE MARTIN**  
sgmartin@prf.org

WEST LAFAYETTE — The 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health reported that 14.5 million people ages 12 and older have alcohol use disorder, or AUD. This represents 5.3 percent of that population, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Researchers in Purdue University’s College of Pharmacy, the Purdue Institute for Drug Discovery and Washington University in St. Louis are synthesizing compounds to treat people affected by AUD. The research was published in the peer-reviewed journal *Frontiers in Pharmacology*.

Richard Van Rijn, adjunct associate professor of medicinal chemistry and molecular pharmacology in Purdue’s College of Pharmacy, leads the research program with Susruta Majumdar, associate professor of pharmaceutical and administrative sciences in the University of Health and Sciences & Pharmacy in St. Louis. Van Rijn said the compounds are based on alkaloids found in the plant *Mitragyna speciosa*, or kratom. These compounds could treat AUD and have less abuse potential than opium-derived opioids.

“We can synthesize a derivative of the natural-occurring kratom alkaloid speciogynine, which has superior potency to reduce alcohol intake,” Van

Rijn said. “We used mouse models of alcohol use and assessment of adverse effects, including monitoring for seizures or hyperactivity. Our synthesized compound does not display adverse effects observed with other kratom alkaloids, including abuse potential, hyperactivity and seizures. As such, this molecule may have utility in humans in treating alcohol use disorder.”

Alkaloids found within kratom, Van Rijn said, are considered less problematic than synthetic opioids or opium-derived opioids like fentanyl, morphine and oxycodone.

“The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency has not scheduled kratom as a substance of abuse,” he said. “More research is needed to properly establish this, but one hypothesis for their lower risk for abuse is related to their cellular pharmacology.”

Still, Van Rijn said, several steps are needed to further develop the compound to treat AUD.

“We will look to reduce any potential off-target effects. Kratom alkaloids may interact with multiple nonopioid receptors, so improving the current molecule series to limit those interactions would make the molecule safer,” Van Rijn said.

“We also need to conduct studies to determine the half life of the drug, how it is metabolized and how much is getting into the brain.”



Arryn Blaine, a doctoral candidate in Purdue University’s College of Pharmacy, conducts research in Richard Van Rijn’s laboratory on compounds that may be able to treat alcohol use disorder. The compounds are based on alkaloids found in the kratom plant.

A provisional patent application on the research was filed by the co-owner, University of Health Science & Pharmacy in St. Louis. Industry leaders looking to develop or license the compound should contact Annie Ghosh of the Purdue Research Foundation Office of Technology Commercialization at aghosh@prf.org about 2022-VANR-69644.

**About Purdue  
Research Foundation  
Office of Technology  
Commercialization**

The Purdue Research Foundation Office of Technology Commercialization operates one of the most comprehensive technology transfer programs among leading research universities in the U.S. Services

provided by this office support the economic development initiatives of Purdue University and benefit the university’s academic activities through commercializing, licensing and protecting Purdue intellectual property. The office is housed in the Convergence Center for Innovation and Collaboration in Discovery Park District at Purdue, ad-

jacent to the Purdue campus. In fiscal year 2020, the office reported 148 deals finalized with 225 technologies signed, 408 disclosures received and 180 issued U.S. patents. The office is managed by the Purdue Research Foundation, which received the 2019 Innovation and Economic Prosperity Universities Award for Place from the

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. In 2020, IPWatchdog Institute ranked Purdue third nationally in startup creation and in the top 20 for patents. The Purdue Research Foundation is a private, nonprofit foundation created to advance the mission of Purdue University. Contact otcip@prf.org for more information.

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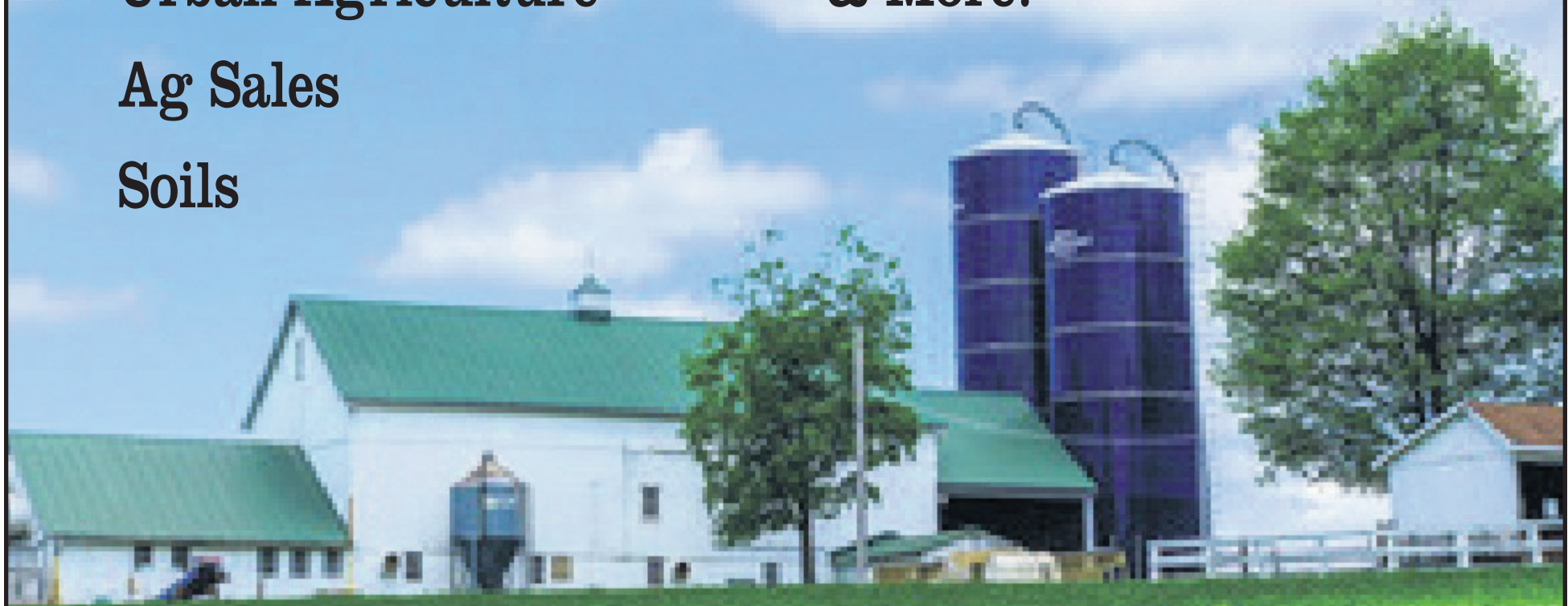
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Photos by BRETT STOVER / bstover@h-ponline.com

Justin Miller and Amber Broxon prepare to plant new produce at the BroxonBerry farm on March 9.

BroxonBerry farm provides local produce

By BRETT STOVER  
bstover@h-ponline.com

In 2016, Amber Broxon quit her full time job as a manager at Pizza Hut in order to pursue a completely different career – as a strawberry farmer.

“When we originally started, the dream was to be a strawberry farmer because I love strawberries,” Broxon said. “I think they are just gorgeous, and they tasted amazing, way better than anything that you can get out of the store. So I decided, ‘I’m going to be a strawberry farmer.’”

However, not everything went according to plan. She called the first year a “failure.”

“I quickly found that you can’t make a living out of selling strawberries because they are very seasonal here,” Broxon said. “So we started growing lettuce and tomatoes, anything that you can think of.”

Rather than give up and go back to the 9-5 life, Broxon doubled down and began to research better farming practices.

“It was a struggle. There were tears, but I took that as a sign to learn about things because if you plant it, they will come,” Broxon said. “I planted a bunch of pumpkins. Everybody likes pumpkins, but there’s a lot more that goes into it than planting it and watching it grow. We got devastated by a bunch of cucumber beetles and squash bugs. I cried, and I went and learned all about how to take care of them without using pesticides and herbicides.”

Now, six years after that decision, Broxon and her husband – Justin Miller, who quit his job to help out last year – own and operate the BroxonBerry farm in Markle.

It’s a small farm, roughly three-fourths of an acre, but the varieties of products have grown over that time, from strawberries to dozens of different items including melons, tomatoes, greens and more. They even have a number of chickens and sell eggs.

The farm has grown “methodically” over the years, Miller said. They don’t want to take on too much all at once, or to set unrealistic goals.

“We can’t take on too much and



Amber Broxon started the BroxonBerry farm in 2016. Today, the farm provides produce to multiple regional companies.



Justin Miller quit his job last year to work full time on the farm.

overextend ourselves and find ourselves in the position where we are no longer able to support,” Miller said. “The last thing we want to do is tell somebody, ‘Hey, sorry. We actually don’t have that this week,’ because a big part of our business model is consistency. They rely on consistency.”

For Broxon and Miller, it’s about the quality, not quantity, of food.

“It was a mission of ours from the

very beginning, so we wanted to do it all without [pesticides],” Miller said. “We didn’t eat that kind of stuff, so we didn’t want to grow that kind of stuff and make other people have to eat it... We just decided that we were going to try to build the whole thing and do it without any of that stuff.”

The BroxonBerry farm is “Certified Naturally Grown,” Broxon said. CNG farms are an alternative to the United States Department of Agriculture’s National Organic Program, with a process that is aimed at helping certifying smaller farms like BroxonBerry.

“You actually get audited,” Miller said. “An inspector comes to the farm and does a whole audit of the farm to make sure you’re following along with the practices that need to be done with all that and everything. We picked that certification up a few years ago.”

Miller and Broxon preferred to eat organic food in their own home, so it made sense for them to make their produce organic as well. Beyond that, Miller said he





Climate change poses an array of challenges. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration notes that the impacts of climate change on various sectors of society are interrelated, a connection that mirrors the ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The human health crisis that arose during the pandemic affected all aspects of life, as illnesses limited worker productivity, thus affecting the global supply chain, including the availability of food.

Scientists warn that a similar scenario could play out as a result of climate change. The agricultural sector could face considerable challenges in the years to come. The Fourth National Climate Assessment is a government-mandated report that must be delivered to the United States Congress once

every four years. Among the many aims of the report are to provide an analysis of the effects of global changes on the natural environment and agriculture. The report also must project major trends for the next 25 to 100 years. The most recent report, delivered in 2018, noted that changing precipitation patterns could intensify in the coming years, leading to more intense periods of heavy rain and longer dry periods.

Those shifting patterns and other changes could lead to an increase in conditions and weather events that pose unique challenges to the agricultural sector.

■ Flooding: The Union of Concerned Scientists notes that many agricultural regions of the United States have already experienced increased flooding. The effects of

flooding on the agricultural sector are often devastating and include accelerated soil erosion, water pollution and damage to infrastructure that challenges farmers' ability to get food from their farms to stores and, ultimately, consumers' dinner tables.

■ Drought: The National Integrated Drought Information System reports that the primary direct economic impact of drought in the agricultural sector is crop failure and pasture losses. The Government of Canada notes that areas of western Canada are already experiencing frequent and severe droughts, and scientists expect other areas of the country to be affected by drought more often in the years to come. The same goes for the United States, which the UCS notes has already dealt with severe drought in Cal-

ifornia, the Great Plains and the midwest. Depleted water supplies are a byproduct of drought, and such depletion can take a toll on crops and livestock.

■ Economics: The effects of climate change on crops and livestock may force farmers to change the nature of their farms. The UCS notes that farmers may be forced to choose crop varieties and animal breeds that are suited to the new conditions sparked by climate change. Going in a new direction could force farmers to make potentially costly investments in machinery and other changes as they make the transition.

Climate change will pose unique challenges to the agricultural sector that could force farmers to make some difficult decisions in the years ahead.



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# HOW AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable agriculture is an approach to farming that will allow modern farmers to meet the needs of a growing population while enhancing environmental quality. That can benefit both current and future generations, and technology will play a vital role in realizing the goals of sustainable agriculture.

According to the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, sustainable agriculture is designed to meet the needs of the present without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs. That's a worthy goal, especially in the face of a growing global population that the United Nations estimates will increase by two billion persons by 2050.

There are numerous benefits to utilizing sustainable agriculture technology, which can be especially advantageous to modern farmers.

**Efficient land management**

Modeling technologies can be utilized to make more efficient use of land. According to Sustainable Brands, a global community of brand innovators, modeling tech-

nologies can be employed in a host of ways, including to identify tillage practices and the status of tile drainage. Certain agricultural technologies have been designed to predict the performance of cropland, which can allow farmers to more effectively and efficiently use their land. Farmers also can employ modeling technologies to determine soil health and water needs and usage, which can benefit the land and ensure resources aren't wasted. Utilization of such technologies ensures farmers can meet the needs of modern consumers without affecting future farmers' ability to do the same.

**Reduce runoff**

The United States Environmental Protection Agency notes that runoff poses a significant threat to the environment. When runoff occurs, fertilizer, bacteria and other pollutants find their way into streams, rivers, lakes, and the ocean. Sustainable Brands notes that nanotechnology is an efficient way to deliver nutrients to crops that can improve both the efficacy of the nutrients and reduce runoff.

**Protect crops**

Sustainable Brands notes

that agricultural biologicals are inputs derived from natural materials that have low toxicity. That low toxicity reduces their environmental impact. Agricultural biologicals utilize the properties of such things as bacteria, fungi and even insects to support healthy crops, potentially improving yield without adversely affecting the environment.

Sustainable agriculture technologies can help modern farmers and their successors meet the needs of a rapidly growing global population.



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Photos by BRETT STOVER / bstover@h-ponline.com  
The BroxonBerry farm is located at 5359 W. 700 N. in Markle, Indiana.

## BROXONBERRY

From page F1

thinks that locally-grown food is “fresher, it tastes better, and it’s consistent.” “You can plan on it more easily. The couple at the grocery store that we deal with in Fort Wayne, they love the fact that we tell them on Monday this is what we have and then on Thursday – what we are going to have that week – and then on Thursday we show up with it,” Miller said. “Oftentimes it’s been picked within a day. Some of the things we pick that morning, package it right up and take it straight to them. I mean, it doesn’t get much fresher than that.” The farm supplies multiple regional businesses with products, Broxon said, including 3 Rivers Natural Grocery Food Co-op & Deli in Fort Wayne, Ginger Fresh Market in Ossian and Chapman Brewing Company in Huntington, as well as other specialty product companies as well. Additionally, the farm is open seven days a week for customers to walk in and purchase items that are available in season. With the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent supply chain-related concerns causing shipping delays around the United States, the availability of local produce has become more crucial. “The last couple of years have shown how distribution systems and all that stuff, it can break down

very easily,” Miller said. “When everything was shut down in the spring of 2020 and even today with shipping delays and whatever, it has caused people to look inward more and get things more locally sourced. With our business model being so small and local, it has insulated us and the community a little bit from the disturbances of having to have the stuff shipped in from California or Mexico or Guatemala or wherever it may be when we are only a half hour drive away from delivering it to the grocery store.” The work has been “rewarding,” Miller said.



Greenhouses allow Amber Broxton and Justin Miller to grow food even when the temperature drops.

Broxon hopes that their success in growing food on a relatively small plot of land, and going “against the grain,” will encourage others to try their hand at growing food at home, even just for themselves. “Most people think it takes 50, 60 acres to even do any-

thing in farming. That’s not true. You can feed yourself just on a small garden

in your backyard,” Broxon said. “I’m not saying we are trying to start a movement.

We just want people to understand that – and get closer with their food.”

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# INDIANA FARM BUREAU ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR 2022 YOUNG FARMERS & AG PROFESSIONALS AWARDS



**PROVIDED BY**  
**INDIANA FARM BUREAU**

Indiana Farm Bureau is now accepting applications for its 2022 Young Farmers & Ag Professionals awards. Each year, INFB recognizes farmers and agricultural professionals who are members between the ages of 18 and 35 with the Achievement and Excellence in Agriculture awards.

The Achievement Award recognizes young INFB members who earn the majority of their income from production agriculture and are judged on their leadership involvement and farm management techniques. The Excellence in Agriculture Award honors members who do not derive the majority of their income from an owned, production agriculture operation, but who actively contribute and grow their involvement in Farm Bureau and agriculture.

Winners and runners-up for both awards are eligible for cash prizes. The winners also will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to the American Farm Bureau Federation's 2023 convention in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Jan. 6-11.

The winner of the Achievement Award will receive a \$11,000 cash prize, courtesy of Bane Welker Equipment and Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance, as well as the David L. Leising Memorial Award. The Excellence in Agriculture Award winner will receive \$11,000 cash prize, courtesy of Farm Credit Mid-America and Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance.

Runners-up for both awards receive a \$1,000 cash prize from Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance.

Eligible applicants must be voting members of INFB between the ages of 18 and 35 as of Jan. 31, 2023 and must also be Indiana residents.

Candidates must submit their applications via the online portal no later than May 1 at 11:59 p.m. EST. Scanned or emailed entries will not be accepted. Finalists will be announced in August.

For additional information and application guidelines, visit [infb.org/yfapawards](http://infb.org/yfapawards).

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- Trusses 48" O.C.
- 29 guage metal roof and siding
- 1-walk door
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- 12" overhang on eaves
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- 1/4" insulation on roof

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- 6x6 solid treated posts
- Trusses 48" O.C.
- 29 guage metal roof and siding
- 1-walk door
- 1-20' x 12'-6" split sliding door
- 1-24' x 14' split sliding door

## Contact Store For Pricing

- 12" overhang on eaves
- 12" overhang on all sides
- 1/4" insulation on roof

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- 6x6 solid treated posts
- Trusses 48" O.C.
- 29 guage metal roof and siding
- 1-walk door
- 1-20' x 12'-6" split sliding door
- 1-24' x 14' split sliding door

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